



BLM - ALASKA FRONTIERS

ISSUE 72 MARCH/APRIL 1999

BLM sets NPR-A lease sale for May 5

BLM will hold an oil and gas lease sale for portions of the northeast corner of the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska on May 5. BLM released a preliminary notice of the sale in January after completing an environmental impact statement last year.

Potential bidders may obtain the Detailed Statement of Sale 991 from the Public Information Center, BLM-Alaska State Office, 222 W. 7th Ave. #13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7599; or call: (907) 271-5960.

The bid packet includes a description of the areas offered for lease; lease terms, conditions and special stipulations; and how and where to submit bids. Only competitive sealed bids submitted as specified in the bid packet will be accepted.

BLM must receive the bids at the above address no later than 3:45 p.m. ADT on May 4. Bids will be opened on May 5, 1999, at 9:00 a.m. at the Z. J. Loussac Public Library Wilda Marston Theatre in Anchorage.

North Slope and BLM create new natural resource internship program

BLM and Ilisagvik College of Barrow signed an agreement on February 3 for a new natural resource internship program. Through that agreement one North Slope Borough undergraduate will be interning this fall for BLM.

The new program is designed to educate and train

people familiar with the North Slope to work in technical and management positions for local land management organizations.

BLM Native liaison Brenda Takes Horse thinks the program has long-term benefits for BLM as well.

"An intern who has worked at BLM and learned why we do what we do, and how we do it, will take that knowledge back to their village," Takes Horse explains.

"The dividend for BLM comes when that student puts that

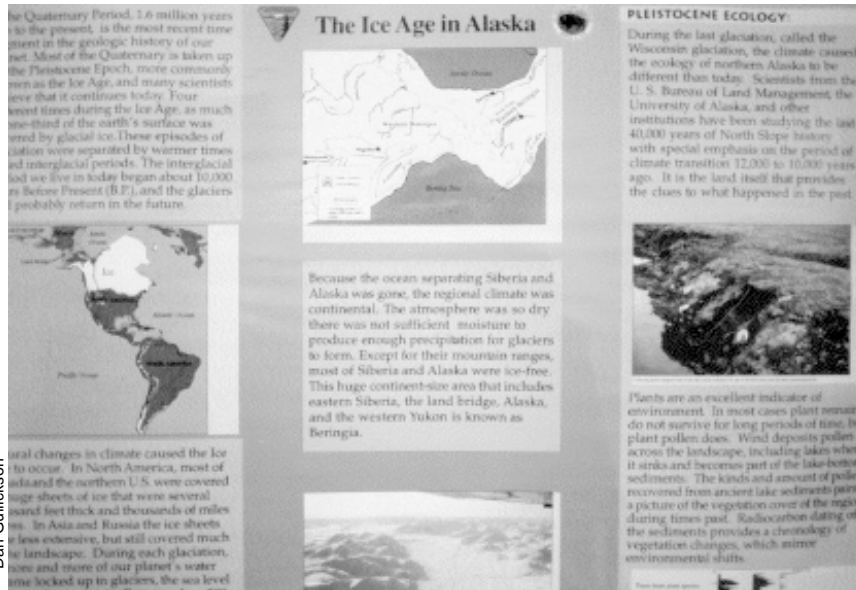


Ilisagvik College President Edna MacLean (left) and BLM Acting State Director Sally Wisely sign an agreement February 3 to bring a North Slope intern to BLM for natural resources training.

knowledge to work. The program could help strengthen future partnerships between BLM and North Slope communities."

BLM and the faculty at Ilisagvik College now are identifying specific activities the student will be involved in and calculating the appropriate college credits for the work. Once on board, BLM natural resource specialists will acquaint the student with land management issues at local, state and national levels through a combination of office and field work.

Inupiat Heritage Center opens in Barrow



Dan Gullickson

BLM donated a mural showing the cultural and ecological history of the Mesa Site to the new Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow. The mural, designed by Mike Kunz, is composed of five panels which were executed and printed by Stan Bloom, visual information specialist for BLM's Northern Field Office in Fairbanks.



Mike Worley

BLM contributed the ice age animal bones and mammoth tusk to the Beringia display.

The dream of building a center to preserve and practice their Inupiat culture began for North Slope Natives many years ago. That dream came true with the grand opening and dedication of the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow on February 3.

People from across the North Slope, federal and state agencies, the oil industry and others gathered for the ceremony of drumming, dancing and speaking.

"The Heritage Center is a multi-purpose building," says Mike Kunz, BLM archaeologist with the Northern Field Office (NFO), who has worked on North Slope projects for 30 years.

"It houses a museum, a library, meeting rooms, a room to practice traditional dancing, and one room large enough to hold 250 people for special gatherings. Its availability to North Slope residents and visitors is very important."

In appreciation of years of collaborative partnerships with the North Slope people, former BLM-NFO manager Dee Ritchie promised that BLM would contribute a display on the cultural and ecological history of the region.

The 11,700-year-old Mesa Site, located on public lands 200 miles south of Barrow, is the focal point of BLM's display. Kunz used information gathered during eight years of Mesa Site research in designing the display.

The five-panel display is dominated by a colorful mural showing ancient horses, mammoths, tigers, lions and giant bears. The photos and text detail the change of climate and environment from the last ice age to modern climate. Also explained is how the climate affected vegetation and caused the extinction of animals; and how those changes also affected humans in the Mesa area at the time. Discoveries at the Mesa Site are changing previous beliefs about the routes used and the timeframes associated with early human migrations.

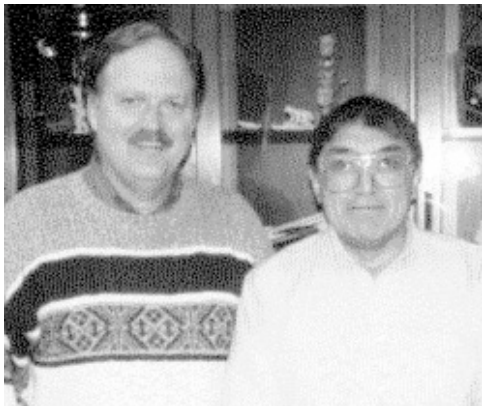
BLM also provided ice-age animal bones and a mammoth tusk in prime condition for a display of ice-age animals. "Many elders visiting the display were amazed at the mammoth tusk that had been collected from the Ikpihpuk River during BLM-sponsored research last summer," Kunz says.

Brenda Takes Horse, BLM-Alaska's Native liaison, says many of the elders' reaction was, "'I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it!' Some of the ancient stories talk about these animals," says Takes Horse. "Nobody knew if they really existed and now, here's proof!"

The North Slope community honored its many partners in the center by engraving their names on a plaque in the entryway. BLM was named as one of the *tutu*, or caribou, level of supporters. Acting state director Sally Wisely was given a plaque of appreciation for BLM's contributions.

"The Inupiat Heritage Center is an important asset to the North Slope people," says Kunz. "It will help the community preserve knowledge and tradition as well as keep their culture alive and vital."

—Sharon Wilson



Mike Worley

On his first trip to Barrow, BLM NFO manager Bob Schneider (l) attended the dedication of the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow where he met North Slope Borough (NSB) Mayor Ben Nageak (r), as well as Oliver Leavitt, vice president of the Arctic Slope Regional Corp.; Charlie Brower, head of the NSB Wildlife Department, and Karen Burnell, head of the NSB Planning Department.

Whaling is a key part of the Inupiat culture, in ancient days and today



Mike Worley

The Nuvukmiut dancers performed at the opening of the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow. At left, dancers hold pieces of baleen — fringed bony plates that hang from the upper palate of baleen whales — and are used to filter krill and other small marine invertebrates from the water.

BLM's contribution to the new Inupiat Center includes a modern day whaling mural which hangs in the entryway of the museum.

The mural was designed and developed by Sue Steinacher, a former BLM interpretive specialist. Gathering ideas from North Slope people, Steinacher tried to capture the importance of whaling to the Inupiat culture.

"I felt it was important to paint a slice of the Arctic today," she says. "I didn't want to depict a historical scene. I want people to discuss how changes in global climate can affect that scene."

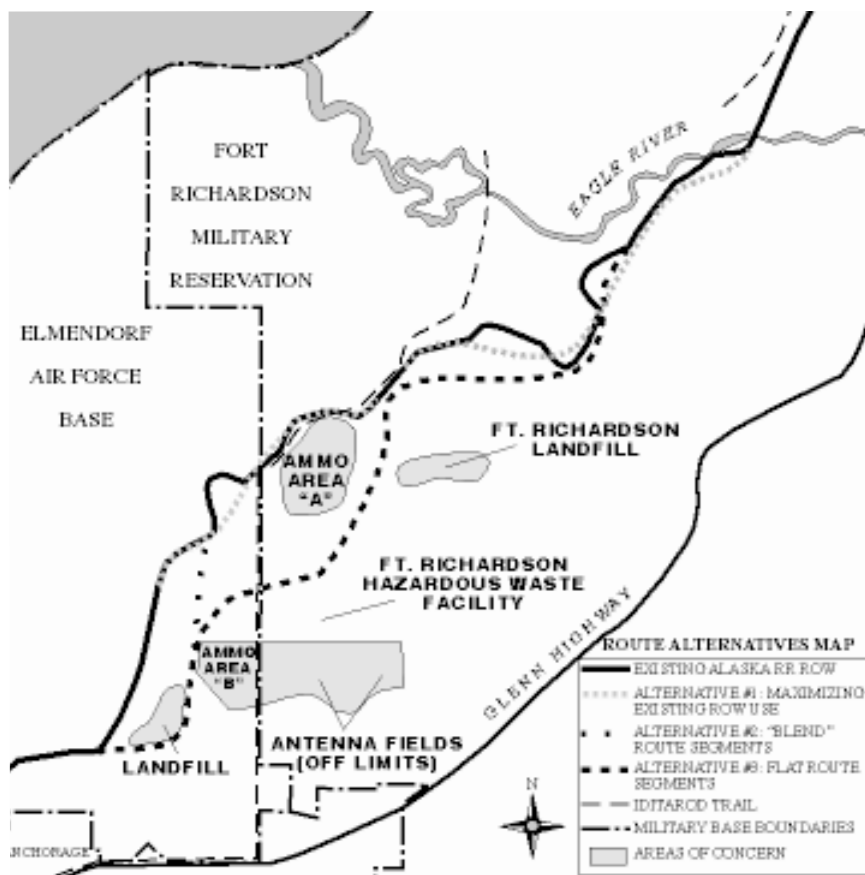
The mural of modern whaling was reviewed for accuracy by whaling captains. Below the mural is a colorful band showing interpretations of what whaling means to different people.

For this project Steinacher used a community collage technique that she's used to create murals in other rural communities — children, adults and elders cut shapes from pieces of colored paper which Steinacher later traces onto the mural before painting them in primary colors.

The overall motif of the mural is reminiscent of an *atigluk*, the women's traditional parka in the Arctic. Below the border is a *quupuk*, a decorative black and white pattern of whales' tails, and the mural is trimmed at the bottom with a silver fox ruff.

In Inupiat culture, the wife of the captain of the whaling boat has a special bond with the whale. That bond causes the whale to allow itself to be captured — giving itself up to the people if they are deserving. Later, the whale's spirit is returned to the sea to be reborn.

New tracks would save people and moose



BLM and the Alaska Railroad (ARR) Corporation expected to hear more environmental issues raised at their March 10 public scoping meeting at the Alaska Railroad Depot in Anchorage. The few people attending the meeting, however, were more interested in how the track realignment project was going.

The project, as proposed by the ARR, would realign and construct double tracks for approximately 10 miles through Elmendorf Air Force base and Fort Richardson Army Base. The realignment would decrease the risk of derailment and prevent accidents by reducing intersections of roads and trains.

Railroad project manager Kraig Hughes says that at the March 10

meeting, "There were no formal comments — the discussions were conversational. The major issue raised was how moose would be affected."

Stephen Davis, with Dames and Moore, a company contracted by BLM to prepare the environmental assessment (EA), says public comment cards haven't really identified issues, but he thinks this may be because the project newsletter prepared by Dames and Moore, gave a good explanation of the issues and alternatives. Hughes adds, "This isn't a controversial project; the public sees its positive aspects." The public scoping period ended March 22.

The existing alignment was built prior to 1920 when construction tech-

nology required the railroad tracks to be built along elevation contour lines. The realignment would address existing problems such as the sharp curves along the existing line that reduce train speed, increase wear and tear on tracks and locomotives, and increase travel times and operating costs.

The scoping meeting was the first step in the EA process to address environmental concerns of the public. Issues already identified by military, state and federal agencies include: collisions between moose and trains; impacts to wetlands and streams; land status and abandonment of track right-of-way; hazardous waste facilities, and contaminated sites that are free from explosives.

Several options are being considered, varying from a slight deviation from the original alignment to extensive realignment of a new corridor through the bases. Davis says discussion with the military at the scoping meeting resulted in a proposal to merge two routes that utilize much of the existing right-of-way.

Martin Hansen, BLM's project lead says the communication between all the major players on the project has been great.

Dames and Moore is waiting for the military's formal recommendations. The draft EA is tentatively due in early May.

— Danielle Allen





East meets north on the Last Frontier

It's probably fair to say that no one realized in 1989 when the Berlin wall came tumbling down, the ripples would reach BLM-Alaska 10 years later.

Yet, that's just what happened last month when Dr. Kostyantyn Yartsev and Dr. Oleksadr Kolodyazhnyy, from the Ukrainian Land and Resource Management Center in Kiev, visited BLM's Division of Cadastral Survey in Anchorage. The two scientists were in Alaska to learn more about BLM's survey process.

Ukraine, once an independent country, was forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union more than 75 years ago. Private land was abolished and farms were collectivized under the Communist agricultural system. But all that is changing.

Now that the Ukraine once again has its own government, the Ukrainians are undertaking an ambitious effort to break up many of the collective farms and restore private land ownership to its citizens.

"A friend of mine working for the Environmental Research Institute of Michigan suggested to the Ukrainians that they come up here to Alaska," says Gust Panos of Cadastral's mapping sciences division. "Our survey and conveyance programs provide good models for transferring land in both small and large parcels."

Yartsev and Kolodyazhnyy were treated to a full round of briefings on the rectangular survey system; the laws that allow for State and Native selections; and the survey process that marks boundaries and provides



Ed Bovy

Dr. Kostyantyn Yartsev and Dr. Oleksadr Kolodyazhnyy, from the Ukrainian Land and Resource Management Center, present Gust Panos and BLM - Alaska with a *bulava*, an ancient symbol of respect traditionally given by their people to a *hetman* (Cossack chief). The bulava is made of hand-carved Carpathian oak.

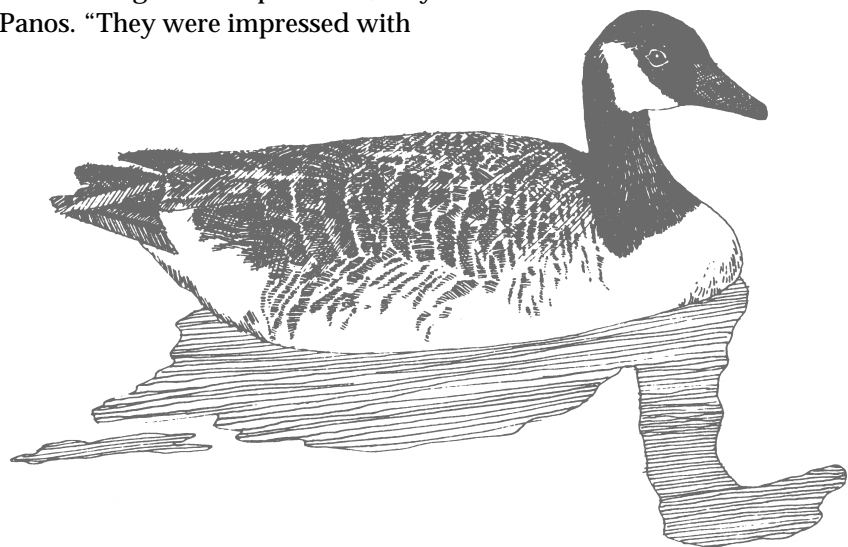
the basis for permanent, legal documentation of a parcel of land. They also got a look at the latest in survey equipment and digital technology as BLM employees from the divisions of Cadastral Survey and Conveyance Management patiently explained everything through a Ukrainian-American translator.

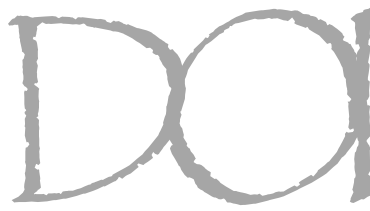
"They'll go back and present their findings to their president," says Panos. "They were impressed with

our openness and how we've built a land record system that puts land into private ownership and keeps track of it."

Yartsev and Kolodyazhnyy were also scheduled to visit the BLM's Eastern States Office to observe the project that is converting America's earliest survey records to electronic format.

— Ed Bovy





celebrates 150 years of service

On March 3, 1849, the safety-pin was patented. It was the only day in history that the U.S. hasn't had a president — president-elect Zachary Taylor refused to be sworn in on a Sunday. And on March 3, 1849, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) came into being.

On March 3, 1999, the DOI celebrated its 150th anniversary at the Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage. Speakers from various federal, state and private agencies spoke or reminisced about times in DOI history. BLM-Alaska also contributed a display to commemorate the event.

Marilyn Heiman, special assistant to DOI Secretary Bruce Babbitt, says the theme of the celebration, *Guardians of the Past, Stewards of the Future*, reflects DOI priorities. Heiman stressed technological advances such as a \$1.2 million project to provide high-speed Internet access to federally recognized tribes in Alaska. "The Bureau of Indian Affairs is focusing on contracting with tribes and other Native organizations to provide services," says Weiman. "We expect to link up to 100 tribes this year and to have all 227 tribes connected within three years. It's important for tribes to have e-mail access to a vast number of public and trust account records, and contracting information."

Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer described the DOI as the, "'Department of Everything,' from keeping public land records to monitoring volcanoes."

Former Alaska governor Bill Sheffield, who has a long history with Alaska land issues, says the DOI has been a key ally in the formation of public policy in Alaska.

Doyon Ltd. president Morris Thompson, who was born and raised on the Yukon River in Tanana, said he

particularly wanted to thank Secretary Babbitt, "for going out and talking to the people in rural areas about subsistence."

Esther Wunnicke, a previous commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, says the DOI was created the year she was born, but she adds, "That's not 1849, but 1922."

Former BLM-Alaska state director Curtis McVee, who first worked for the BLM in the summer of '49 as a seasonal employee, discussed how the General Land Office was created in 1812 to transfer public lands to the states.

Alaska Conservation Foundation executive director Deborah Williams says that as a conservationist, the DOI has the lead. "All five major Alaska industries — oil and gas, fishing, tourism, subsistence and government— require a healthy environment."

Williams, who was Babbitt's special assistant to Alaska before Heiman, thanked the DOI for its efforts to include traditional knowledge when making decisions. "And to the future DOI," she added, "let's continue to strive for robust tribal governments, healthy ecosystems and a continued balanced approach to development."

New DOI projects include construction of a visitor center for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve — the nation's largest park, new visitor facilities in Homer for the Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, and a multi-agency center at Coldfoot that will introduce visitors to the Arctic.

—Janet Malone



When the Department of the Interior first arrived in Alaska, the territory — then known as Russian America — had been a Russian colony for more than 100 years.

Few Americans had heard of it and even the Russians' knowledge of their huge possession was mostly limited to the coastal areas south of the Yukon River mouth.

BLM wants public comment on future mineral studies

The BLM is asking industry, government agencies and the public to help determine which federal lands should be studied next for mineral potential as part of a new Long Range Mineral Assessment Plan. The draft plan discusses what mineral assessments are and the principal areas identified for future study. Unstudied areas are discussed in detail and prioritized as to where future mineral assessments should be conducted.

BLM mineral studies seek to determine the type, amount and distribution of mineral deposits, and make resource estimates when possible. During the past 15 years, 10 mining district studies have been completed in Alaska by the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the BLM. BLM mineral studies currently are underway in the Stikine and Koyukuk areas. Comments should be submitted by April 30 to:

Juneau Mineral Info. Cntr-BLM
100 Savikko Road
Douglas, AK 99824
<http://juneau.ak.blm.gov>

Presentations will be made to meetings of the Alaska Miners Association in Juneau, Fairbanks and Anchorage in April. For more information or a copy of the plan, contact:

Roger Baer
907-364-1554
rbaer@ak.blm.gov or
Don Baggs
907-271-2454
dbaggs@ak.blm.gov

Restrictions on motorized access to closed Gulkana National Wild River boat launch

A gate was installed on a section of the Alyeska Pipeline road at Richardson Highway milepost 149 to prohibit public access to a temporary boat launch. Alyeska Pipeline Co. had relocated the gate on the pipeline road to allow public access to a temporary campground and boat launch during reconstruction of the Sourdough Creek Campground between 1991 and 1993.

To meet conditions of an agreement between BLM and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the temporary boat launch is now closed, and the gate blocking access now will be locked between April 15 and October 15 each year.

The gate is located between the end of a temporary campground site and the Gulkana National Wild River, just north of the Sourdough Creek Campground.

For more information, contact:
BLM Glennallen Field Office
PO Box 147
Glennallen, AK 99566
or call:
907-822-3217



BLM seeks advisory council nominees

The BLM is calling for nominations to a statewide resource advisory council. The council advises and makes recommendations to BLM on land management issues for nearly 90 million acres of public lands in Alaska.

The Alaska Resource Advisory Council (RAC) includes representatives of energy, tourism and commercial recreation interests; environmental, archeological and historic interests; and elected officials, Alaska Native organizations and the general public. Members serve two-year terms and may be reappointed for consecutive terms.

RAC members serve without salary but are reimbursed for travel expenses. All nominees must be Alaska residents. Individuals may nominate themselves or others. Nominees should have appropriate background and experience to give informed, objective advice on a broad array of public land issues, and show commitment to collaboration in seeking solutions to those issues.

Nomination forms are available at BLM offices in Anchorage (907-271-5555) and Fairbanks (907-474-2231) and on the internet at: www.ak.blm.gov/advisory.html. All nominations must be accompanied by letters of reference from the interests or organizations to be represented. Nominations will be accepted until May 7, 1999. Final selection will be made by the Secretary of the Interior and will become effective October 1.

Roadside reverie ...

Sweeping vistas ... abundant wildlife ... unique cultural resources ... glacier sculpted beauty ... abundant patches of berries ... and lush fields of flowers. The Denali Highway is a remote and challenging road that attracts thousands of Alaska residents and visitors each year for access to outstanding scenic, recreational, fishing and hunting opportunities.

A great deal of the 136-mile road between Paxson and Cantwell is bordered by public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Glennallen Field Office. The GFO outdoor recreation staff is looking at ways to increase understanding of the area's special features and ecosystems, while enhancing travelers' experiences along the highway.

Last fall, the GFO contracted for the development of an interpretive plan for the highway corridor that will recommend prime sites for interpretive opportunities, perhaps in the form of signs or exhibits. Bucy and Associates of Corvallis, Oregon, spent the winter inventorying Denali Highway resources while considering management goals for the area. The

company helped develop well-received interpretive plans for the Dalton Highway and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Refuge in Fairbanks. They'll spend more time exploring the Denali Highway this summer.

Gene Ervine, BLM's lead interpretive specialist for Alaska says, "This highway bridges Denali National Park and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. It opens up some of Alaska's most spectacular wilderness landscape to visitors. It's our job to help our visitors understand what's there and to manage it for the future."

Meanwhile a team of BLM geologists and minerals specialists is revising and updating *Rocks, Ridges & Glaciers*, the 1991 BLM roadside guide to geologic and topographic features along the Denali Highway. The guide is a popular publication for tourists and has been used by geology students at the Prince William Sound Community College Copper Basin Campus. The new edition should be available by Fall, 1999.

—KJ Mushovic



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